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# DIRTSPORTS +Off-Road



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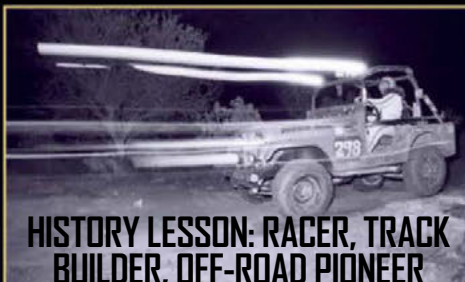
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READY TO ROLL OFF THE LINE OF THE  
GENERAL TIRE/NORRA MEXICAN 1000 IS  
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT EMERY

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# DIRTSPORTS +Off-Road

VOLUME 49 | NUMBER 10



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PHOTO: MATT EMERY



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**NETWORK CONTENT DIRECTOR**  
RICK PEWÉ

**EDITOR**  
MATT EMERY

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
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**EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE**  
QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS  
AND NEW PRODUCT RELEASES TO:  
MEMERY@ENTHUSIASTNETWORK.COM

**ART DIRECTION & DESIGN**  
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# WATCHING OUT FOR US



**A** buddy of mine is one of those political types. He loves to get on his computer and then on one of the many political threads. Then he gets on someone's case if theirs and his political beliefs don't mesh.

I'm not too much of a political animal. It's not that I'm not opinionated; I'm plenty of that, but it may be that I'm too much of a realist (or cynic) to think that much will ever change when it comes to the people who run our state and nation. Like Pete Townsend succinctly said, "Welcome to the new boss, same as the old boss."

I've watched as the government made us first buy "green stickers" and then "wilderness passes." In both cases they said that they'd use the money for our benefit and to build

riding areas. They actually used the money to buy 4WD vehicles and helicopters to keep an eye on us and where we were riding, or for another of their pet projects that had absolutely nothing to do with off-roading.

So, what am I leading up to? Well, the do-gooding Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has its eyes on UTVs. I'm not saying that the CPSC is all-bad, or that they haven't removed truly dangerous products and kept people safe, it's just that they don't know when to say "OK, that's good."

Luckily, we have some folks on our side. SEMA is one of them. SEMA-supported legislation directing the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a study on requirements for recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs) proposed by the CPSC was passed by the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and awaits a vote before the full Senate. A U.S. House subcommittee also reviewed the bill and is expected to pass it in the coming weeks. ROVs generally accommodate a side-by-side driver/passenger in a compartment equipped with rollbars and can attain speeds greater than 30 mph. The legislation would postpone further action on the CPSC's proposed rule pending the study. SEMA submitted a letter in support of the legislation and has joined with other companies and organizations to support an alternative industry ROV standard that would not stifle future design innovations and potentially limit use. The industry standard recognizes that there are a wide variety of uses and terrains for which ROVs are constructed, from utility to recreation.

For more information, visit the SEMA Action Network website. For details, contact Eric Snyder at [erics@sema.org](mailto:erics@sema.org).

We'll have to see how things shake out, but until then, have fun, be safe, and we'll see you next month.

**Matt Emery**

[MEmer@enthusiastnetwork.com](mailto:MEmer@enthusiastnetwork.com) 

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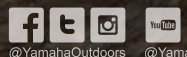
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## VOSS WINS AT SILVER STATE

**J**ason Voss has another win to add to his already impressive résumé. Voss beat Rob MacCachren by 3 minutes and 36 seconds in his "Trick-Truck" at the 2015 Best in the Desert Silver State 300 held in Northern Nevada at the beginning of May. The win puts Voss Fourth in the point standings. Voss has won the Best in the Desert Championship two years in a row. Voss,



CREDIT: SHAUN OCHSNER (FILE PHOTO)

however, has his work cut out for him if he is to win another championship this year as there are only three events left on the

2015 schedule, including Vegas to Reno, Bluewater Challenge, and the final race in Henderson, Nevada, in December.



CREDIT: COURTESY MILLER MOTORSPORTS PARK

## MILLER MOTORSPORTS PARK TO CLOSE

**M**iller Motorsports Park announced that it has elected not to renew its lease with Tooele County in Utah and will cease operations at the end of the racing season. Miller Motorsports Park will continue to host events on its schedule through October 31, 2015, which includes the

Lucas Oil Off Road Nationals, Lucas Oil Regional Series Utah, and the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championship. Gary Miller, owner of the Larry H. Miller Group of Companies, stated, "On behalf of my family, I would like to thank those who supported the track over the years, both locally and worldwide, for their

enthusiasm and use of the facility." The track was built in 2004 in Tooele, Utah, just outside of Salt Lake City by Larry H. Miller on 24 acres and features 220 team garages, a road course, performance auto museum, go-kart track, zipline, off-road track, rockcrawling grounds, and a motocross track. **DS**





**THE TRAIL AHEAD  
LOOKS ROUGH. YOU:**

- ☐ ask for mercy
- ☐ ask for more

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2"	Front Leveling Strut Spacers	\$64.95
3.5"	Complete Kit w/Upper Arms	\$499.95
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#### 2007-2013 1500 PU / SUV 4WD

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### DODGE



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\*2009-2011 models ONLY!

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#### 2009-2014 F-150 4WD

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3.75"	2.5" susp. / 1.25" body	<del>\$449.95</del> - \$419.95
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# THE GENERAL TIRE/NORRA MEXICAN 1000



**ABOVE:**  
Robby Gordon leaves the line in his Gordini to start the cars and trucks at the 2015 General Tire NORRA Mexican 1000.

## GOING VINTAGE IN OLD MEXICO

**WORDS** // MATT EMERY, SHAUN OSCHNER, SUE MEAD, MARK STAHL, RANDY LUDWIG, AND COURTESY OF GENERAL TIRES

**IMAGES** // MATT EMERY, SHAUN OSCHNER, SUE MEAD, MARK STAHL, TRACKSIDE PHOTO AND COURTESY OF GENERAL TIRE AND ART EUGENIO AT GETSOME PHOTOGRAPHY

Everywhere you looked, the cars, trucks, and motorcycles that were to compete in the 2015 General Tires/NORRA Mexican 1000 seemed to have been dropped into Ensenada from some kind of wonderful time warp. But it was real.

And it was real fun to not only be around these historic, but still competitive race vehicles, but also the guys who drove them. Names such as Walker Evans, Rod Hall, Bob Gordon, Mark Stahl, Curt LeDuc, Bud Feldcamp, Larry Ragland, and 2015 NORRA Grand Marshall Walker Evans are Baja legends, and they were here to compete again.

Most of them were in the cars/trucks that they raced “back then” or in Stahl’s case, were racing in vehicles that were historic, but that others originally drove.

The weekend’s festivities began Friday, April 24, 2105 at the Horsepower Ranch, where the vehicles were displayed and bench racing/bull sessions lasted long into the night. Early the next day, the motorcycles blasted off the line and headed for the far away finish. Ranging from ‘70s era Triumphs and Huskys, a new KTM rally bike and incredibly a Honda three-wheeler, the bikers looked like a hearty bunch.

The cars and trucks were flagged off the line promptly at 7 a.m. Sunday. As can be expected, it was the vintage classes that made up the majority of the contestants. The largest class may well have been the Bronco class with nearly every style Bronco taking part. They were led out onto the course by perhaps the most iconic Baja racing vehicle ever, the Parnelli Jones driven Stroppe “Big

Oly” Bronco. Our own Boyd Jaynes competed in his Bronco and luminaries, such as Rod Hall, were back in the driver seat of the Bronco that he raced way back in the day.

The General Tires/NORRA Mexican 1000 is a rally, not a full-out race, so the cars/trucks first transited to Santo Tomas, where the first special speed section began. The first day’s total mileage is 433.5 miles, with 256 of those being “racing” miles. The rest is made up of transit miles getting to and from the special speed sections. The group finished the first day’s racing in Bahia De Los Angeles, where the party really began.

In this coverage, we’re doing things a bit differently. Rather than just writing about the rally, we’re going to let those who were in it discuss their time in the saddle. Some won, while some broke. Just like in every Baja race ever, but their stories will live on, just as the Mexican 1000 has.



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# THE GENERAL TIRE/ NORRA MEXICAN 1000



**ABOVE:**  
Gigi Garner, daughter of James Garner, wore her dad's racing jacket as she waved off the competitors. Garner, who raced in many of the early races, was honored as the vintage classes were run in his memory.



**ABOVE:**  
In addition to historic cars, there were plenty of past Baja winners driving their old cars, such as Lightnin' Larry Ragland.



## BUD FELDCAMP

Bud Feldcamp has been racing in Baja since there has been racing in Baja and won with teammate Malcolm Smith. His observations of his NORRA ride is that while things may have changed in the cities of Mexico, "once you're out of them the roads and trails of the surrounding desert haven't changed at all. They're still rough and desolate. I really enjoy the

**RIGHT:**  
The crowd was huge for the 7 a.m. start.



**BELOW:**  
Curt LeDuc was codriving with John Gable in his Ford pickup. Gable is the son of Hollywood legend Clark Gable.



**ABOVE:**  
The largest class was the vintage Broncos. The iconic Ford was well represented with nine entries, and led by the most famous Bronco of them all, the Parnelli Jones/Stroppe Big Oly.



**LEFT:**  
2015 NORRA Grand Marshal Walker Evans was actually racing in the event. Gotta love that.

**LEFT:**  
The crowd went wild when the Yellow Jackets' '70 Triumph left the line. The Yellow Jackets are a racing club dating back to the 1930s, and they are in Baja "to give this race hell."



**ABOVE:**  
Looking at the cars lined up at the starting line, one would swear it was still 1972.

NORRA rally. The way they space us out at the start, it makes it so there's very little dust to contend with. I've never liked going fast when I can't see."

Feldcamp went on to say that once they found a float bowl gremlin, his car ran great. That car being the BelRay Bullet. Like many of the vehicles that ran at NORRA, it belongs in a museum.

**RIGHT:**  
Racing legend Dr. Bud Feldcamp and two of his vintage race cars.





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## THE GENERAL TIRE/ NORRA MEXICAN 1000



**LEFT:**  
Multi-time Baja  
champion Mark  
Stahl now owns  
Ivan Stewart's Ford  
truck, and he's rac-  
ing it in the 1000.



**ABOVE:**  
Just as competitive as when Stewart drove it, Stahl took the Ford to a class win.

### MARK STAHL

Stahl is a multi-time Baja overall winner, multiple NORRA class winner and the proud owner of the Ivan Stewart/BFGoodrich/Fillmore '78 Ford F100. "We had a great run down the Baja peninsula for this year's NORRA Mexican 1000. We left the starting line first in our class and the truck was running great. About 100 miles into the first leg we started to question our GPS. We got off course a few times and ended up losing about 20 minutes to our competition. Luckily, we found someone with the correct GPS chip and were soon back on track.

"To prevent the first day's problems, NORRA loaded everyone's GPS course route. Unfortunately, when we left the starting line our GPS decided not to work at all. Luckily, the route was one I had travelled many times. We still had over 250 miles of racing to go for the day, so we took a GPS out of our chase truck to finish the day. The rest of the day went great and we pulled into Loreto with the lead in our class.

"Day three took us from Loreto to La Paz, over the mountains back to the Pacific coast of Baja. We pushed on with another stage win and were

onto the last stage of the day to La Paz. About 40 miles from the finish we came up to some major silt and three or four trucks and buggies were stuck in it. It was a mess. We thought our class competitor John Ehmke made it through cleanly, but we came around a corner to see him stuck. After 30 minutes of digging we got him going, but we were now stuck. Boyd Jaynes in his 4WD Bronco pulled us out and Mark Hurber in his 4WD Suburban said he would get us through. Off we went with no problems, other than not being able to see anything."

### BOYD JAYNES/BRYAN GODFREY

Day one proved to be a rough one for Boyd Jaynes, codriver Bryan Godfrey, and the No. 26 Fox Bronco, perhaps better known as the Caballo del Diablo, as the main shaft in the C4 transmission broke. The pair was lucky to finish the first stage in Baja de Los Angeles before going in search of repair. Luckily, the parts to repair the transmission were found, and the Bronco was up and ready for day two. There were a few handling issues but they continued on at a good enough pace to take another stage win for the day. After leaving Loreto, the Bronco and its competitors entered some rough off-road sections, and some silt beds had trapped

a number of vehicles. It didn't make much of a difference since everyone else was stuck too.

Day four would bring a little more trouble for the Bronco. A leaf-spring center pin broke and allowed the rear end to move around a little bit, forcing the Bronco to crabwalk the rest of the leg. Unfortunately, this wasn't during a straightaway section, but while traversing the cliffs that overhang the sea. The Caballo Del Diablo crew would be able to fix the leaf spring during a scheduled fuel stop in time to start the final stage and finish the race in San Jose del Cabo, where Jaynes and Godfrey would finish in First Place of their class.

**RIGHT:**  
Though a transmission  
problem slowed them,  
the Caballo del Diablo  
team fought back.



**ABOVE:**  
Boyd Jaynes and Bryan Godfrey celebrate a hard earned victory at the finish of the NORRA 1000.



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## THE GENERAL TIRE/ NORRA MEXICAN 1000



**LEFT:**  
Randy Ludwig  
rolling through  
the desert as the  
sun goes down.

**RIGHT:**  
It may have been  
jumps like this  
that caused the  
wheel bearing to  
fail. But it sure  
has style!



### RANDY "RAPIDO" LUDWIG

"Since we had such a great time at the NORRA event last year, the same team jumped at the opportunity to codrive and chase for my yellow '67 Ford Bronco that we call 'The Bukineer.' My friends Ron Malekow, Randy Mark, Johnny Richards and I would trade off seat time as we made our way down the Baja peninsula. Our chase support team consisted of Mark Womack and Tom Kaye.

"We started day one in the eight slot and my Bronco's 425hp 347 stroker ran flawlessly. The Bukineer ate up the sweeping open dirt roads on the day's

first special section and the second special led us through some spectacular scenic coastal routes to valleys across the peninsula to the Sea of Cortez. By the end of our day we were 40th OA and First Place in our class. The start of day two's 426 miles from BoLA to Loreto had some rocky hills, and one of those rocks slit open our rear tire. It would be the first of two flats within 20 miles. Day two's second special had some fast roads leading to El Arco, where the Mag 7 Pit Team was setup. Three miles in we got the second flat and then about 25 miles later

a front wheel bearing exploded, taking out the hub and spindle. We were able to limp into El Arco, but the damage was too extensive. Unfortunately, the racing part of our adventure was over.

"On the way home, we stopped in Guerrero Negro to get a room for the night. As Baja destiny would have it, we ran into the banged-up-but-not-out No. 35 Big Oly Tribute Bronco who were having no luck finding a master cylinder. To keep them in the hunt, we gladly donated ours to their cause. We know they'd have done the same for us."

### SUE MEAD

"Take a 45-degree right and drive along the power lines," I instructed Rod Hall, the winning-est racer of the Baja 1000 and hundreds of off-road races. Just when the course notes stopped matching the track, our GPS malfunctioned. Hall had trained me for off-road racing in 1995 but it had been two decades since I had been back in the 'right seat'—and now we were lost.

"Hall skillfully swung the reins of the restored '69 Bronco that he drove to an overall victory in the 1969 Mexican 1000 and powered through a sand wash. It was a throwback memory of training with—and now riding again with—the legendary and successful racer who calls himself 'the tortoise,' who went on to drive his team to a Second Place finish in his 48th run of the Baja 1000.

"Day two found me in the right seat next to 'the hare' and navigating for the renowned Robby Gordon in his inaugural Mexican 1000. It was hair-raising as Gordon hit a top speed of 143 mph, with an average speed of 70.5 mph. Gordon used the event to test his HST 'Gordini,' built for the upcoming 2016 Dakar run, and took home the winner-take-all purse of \$50,000 in the new Pro Unlimited Class."

Day four provided a short stint navigating for third-generation off-roader, Shelby Hall. The 27-year-old racer handled the Bronco with vigor and showed the years of training with her grandfather, Rod Hall. In a fitting end to their shared driving duties, Rod and Shelby crossed the finish line together with Shelby navigating the final stages.



#### ABOVE:

Day one saw Sue Mead with old driving partner Rod Hall. Mead spent the first day of the rally in Hall's vintage Bronco.

#### LEFT:

The second day saw her with Robby Gordon and the Gordini where he hit 143 mph. Talk about from one extreme to another!





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## THE GENERAL TIRE/ NORRA MEXICAN 1000



**ABOVE:**

Robby Gordon blasts into the finish line in the "Gordini" with an overall win for the Pro Unlimited class.

**BELOW:**

Walker Evans raced an Alumicraft Class 1 to a Second Place finish in the Pro Unlimited Class.



**ABOVE:**

Bill Hernquist took the Vintage Open Buggy win in his beautifully prepared VW.



**LEFT:**

It seems that Rob Usink's '70 400 Husqvarna is missing an air cleaner element, but they still took Second Place in the Super Vintage bike class.

**RIGHT:**

Open Vintage Buggy winner "Baja" Bob Gordon and codriver celebrate their win with a traditional shot of tequila.



**ABOVE:**

What everyone was racing for: a First Place trophy.

### ALL ROADS LEAD TO CABO


San Jose Del Cabo is where the party is and the NORRA teams couldn't wait to get there. The backdrop for the finish line was the historic downtown section of San Jose Del Cabo. Lined with shops and cantinas, the party got started early. In Baja, off-road racing is a big deal and it isn't often the racers and vehicles make it this far south.

Stage 5 of the NORRA Rally went from Los Barrilles to San Jose Del Cabo and it was the bikes that came blasting in first. Mike Johnson would take the overall NORRA win on a Honda CRF450X in the Modern Open class. It wouldn't be long

before Robby Gordon's bright orange Gordini would come to a screeching halt at the finish. Gordon is considered one of the biggest celebrities in these parts, so of course the minute he stepped out of his race vehicle, fans mobbed around him for autographs. Gordon won the Pro-Unlimited class. Followed by Gordon was Walker Evans driving a modern day class 1.

Robby Gordon's dad, Bob Gordon kept things old school with a first place finish in a Chenoweth 2-seater. One by one, race vehicles would finish the rally, with drivers taking a shot of tequila or celebrating

with a cold beer.

At nightfall, NORRA threw a huge beachside party at a private resort complete with all the fixings. Finishing the Rally was an accomplishment for many as table talk all around was war stories from the week. Awards were given out to the top finishers and the night was capped off with a spectacular fireworks show that had guests from adjacent resorts asking questions about the rally. Many of the racers vowed to return next year to race the NORRA Rally, one of the most historic races on the Baja Peninsula. 





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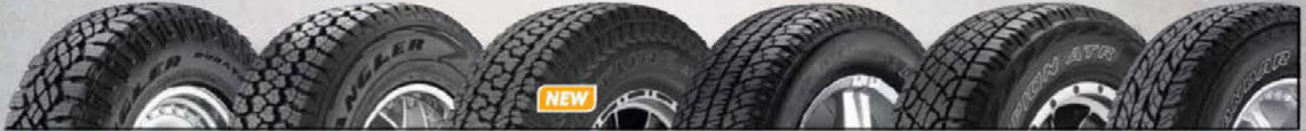
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## FOUR WHEELS, FIVE CYLINDERS, AND A BUNCH OF FUN

**A**ndrew Cuba has been a subscriber to *Dirt Sports* (and now *Dirt Sports + Off-Road*) for many years, and for that we thank him. No, we didn't shoot his '05 Chevy Colorado because of that, we did it simply due to the fact that this truck has much of what we look for when eyeballing potential feature vehicles. We want them to have the right mods by good builders, and we want it to have a little style too.

Cuba must feel the same way as he says, "I always liked the '05 Chevy Colorado body style; it would just need some tweaks to the suspension to get it to do what I wanted." Cuba is a well-rounded off-roader in that he likes trucks,



and competition. He claims to have never missed a Lucas Oil short-course race held in California.

At 50, he's been around the track a few times himself, but when he went looking for a shop to transform his Colorado, he went for youthful exuberance. "My pre-

runner was built by some very talented young fabricators, a new generation of people who have some amazing talent and show great pride in there work, as my truck reflects," he says. They have incorporated computer designs, great welding techniques, and great



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# IDE

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CHALLENGE

ENTHUSIASTS COMPETE  
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OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE  
DRIVING COMPETITION.

**MOTORTREND** **FOURWHEELER**

**BFGoodrich® Tires, MOTORTREND and FOUR WHEELER invited performance driving enthusiasts to submit a short video proving he or she was indeed "driver enough" to lay down the fastest lap time behind the wheel of a 2015 Mustang GT and a 2014 Ford Raptor.** Six winners were handpicked from around the country and flown out to Willow Springs International Raceway, just north of Los Angeles, to challenge themselves and each other behind the wheel. To make things even more interesting, another 50 local enthusiasts were presented with the opportunity to sign up through a microsite to partake in the event.

The Driver Enough Challenge consisted of a customized road course as well as a rough and demanding off-road track. The road course challenged participants through a series of fast straights, tight corners and a host of elevation changes. Adjacent to the road course, the rugged off-road track was designed to test the drivers' skills behind the wheel on rough, rocky terrain.

In addition to a classroom "chalk talk," professional driving instructors demoed the fastest lines around each respective course, and our challengers were also introduced to our celebrity BFGoodrich performance pro drivers who set baseline lap times on each course, thus setting the ultimate time to beat.

Brad Lovell has raced and won many off-road races including: Baja 1000, Ultra 4, TORC, and nearly every other off-road discipline. His on-road counterpart, Andrew Comrie-Picard, has won the North American Rally Championship, holds a string of 17 consecutive Rally America podiums and is an X Games Rally medalist.

Lovell and ACP weren't the only two glitterati at the Driver Enough Challenge. Road racing legend

Tommy Kendall made an appearance, as did *Motor Trend's* globetrotting Editor-in-Chief, Ed Loh. Additionally, Rick Péwé, Content Director of the *Four Wheeler* Network, offered his insight and tips for the off-road portion.

BFGoodrich® Tires took full advantage of the event to prove its tires were also up to the task at hand. The on-road course featured a group of brand-new 2015 Mustang GT's

## "CHALLENGERS WERE INTRODUCED TO OUR CELEBRITY PRO DRIVERS WHO SET BASELINE TIMES ON EACH COURSE"

fitted with g-Force™ Comp-2™ A/S tires, BFGoodrich® Tire's best-ever, ultra-high performance all-season tire. The g-Force™ Comp-2 A/S™ rubber gave the challengers the ability to accelerate faster and brake harder in their quest for fast times.

The off-road course proved to be the perfect

setting for 2014 Ford Raptors outfitted with BFGoodrich® Tire's All-Terrain T/A® KO2 meats. The All-Terrain T/A® KO2's tougher sidewalls, gravel endurance and improved traction all worked wonders on the off-road course as they helped the drivers hook up and push ahead.

Once the dust settled and the track went cold, each challenger's cumulative times and overall performance of on and off-road runs were calculated to determine our winners. Wade Koehl from Cypress, TX, came home with third, Gardner Nichols from Boulder, CO, took second place, and Mike Iler, from Redlands, CA, took home first place and won the grand prize of a new set of BFGoodrich® Tires.

Our pro drivers were astonished with Iler's uncanny ability to lay down consistent, controlled and fast lap times, particularly as he doesn't have any prior racing experience. Iler lapped the off-road course within a tenth of a second of Lovell's pro lap time, and proceeded to beat the on-road pro by nearly a second!

The Driver Enough Challenge was such a success that similar events may be planned in the future. Think you're driver enough? You might get the chance to prove it soon!





## A COLORADO PRERUNNER FOR THE WIDE OPEN SPACES



**LEFT:**

Looking as at home in the desert as it does on the street, this Chevy Colorado has everything it needs to succeed in both environments.



**ABOVE:**

The carbon-fiber accent wrap on the hood gives the stark white Colorado a little style.

**BELOW:**

Deaver springs as well as King 2.5 triple bypass shocks combine to give the rear-end a good amount of well-controlled travel. A pair of King's 2.0 bumpstops are mounted to the frame just in case Cuba uses up all 16 inches of travel.

imagination to help bring any ideas to life."

One of the main young guns who worked on the truck is Steven Parks of SMP Fabrication in Burbank, California. SMP has had a solid reputation for a while, and Cuba had a problem that they were able to fix. Mainly, he wanted to use Dynasty Off Road Innovations A-arms, but DORI didn't actually make a set for the Z71 model. Parks didn't see a problem, and not only modified the A-arms to fit, but also for the King 2.5 coilovers, 2.5 triple bypass, and 2.0 shorty bumpstops for a total of 17 inches of travel.

There's plenty of travel out back, too. Again SMP was tasked with the job and they used Deaver springs as well as King 2.5 triple bypass shocks for a combined 16 inches of travel. Just in case Cuba used up all that travel, a pair of King 2.0

shorty bumpstops were mounted into the frame.

Cuba says that the new 17x9 Method NV beadlock wheels and Firestone Destination tires (35x12.5x17R) were going to need more room than the stock fenders were able to provide. He also says that, "I'm not the kind of guy to sit and wait for the UPS guy to show up! So I bribed my brother-in-law with breakfast and beers to drive me to McNeil Racing in Lemon Grove, California, to pick up the new fiberglass fenders."

He explained to SMP what he wanted and they took over. They mounted the fenders and then installed two 8-inch Vision X LED lights, one 10-inch Rigid LED and a huge 50-inch Rigid Industry LED above the front windshield. Below the windshield, Cuba had Envy Auto Spa and Wraps of Burbank, California, put a



**ABOVE:**

Providing plenty of protection is the SMP fabricated front bumper/skidplate assembly. It features an aluminum skidplate as well as two 8-inch Vision X LED lights and one 10-inch Rigid LED mounted on top.



**ABOVE:**

Steven Parks of SMP first modified a set of Dynasty Off Road Innovations A-arms to fit the Z71 model Chevy and then installed a pairing of King's 2.5 coilovers, 2.5 triple bypass and 2.0 shorty bumpstops for a total of 17 inches of travel.



**ABOVE:**

Firestone is a name that goes back to the beginning of off-road racing, and the 35-inch Destination tires work great with the 17-inch Method beadlock wheels.



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## A COLORADO PRERUNNER FOR THE WIDE OPEN SPACES

nice carbon-fiber-style wrap on the hood to add a little style to the otherwise very white truck.

The front and rear bumpers are custom SMP creations that scream prerunner. Made from 1.75 DOM .120 wall tubing, the front unit features a skidplate while the rear has a built-in hitch receiver, ready for Cuba to tow his bike trailer.

The talents of SMP are on display in the bed too, as they custom fabbed a tire carrier/tailgate and the loop for the upper shock mounts is a work of art. Other tricks include a Spyder third brake light and a set of Anzo taillights.

Being the go-getter that he is, Cuba picked up a pair of Corbeau race seats

at his local 4 Wheel Parts store and dropped those off to SMP. He ditched the stock unit for a Kenwood stereo unit, and when asked about safety equipment, Cuba mentioned a Cobra CB radio.

Cuba says that he still has more work for Parks to do, as he wants a full 'cage. He's also toying with the idea of installing a V-8, so a Currie rearend is in order.

And with what's in the engine bay now, the huge SMP crossbrace may be the best thing about it. Cuba jokes that by having a I-5, 3.5L engine, his isn't the fastest truck out there, but it gets him where he wants to go and has a lot of fun at the same time. He did install a K&N air cleaner and a set of mufflers from Morse



**ABOVE:** Providing just some of the illumination is the 50-inch Rigid Industries LED light bar. To give the Chevy plenty of lighting to pierce the dark desert night, the big Rigid is joined by another Rigid LED and a pair of Vision X LED units.



**ABOVE:** Giving the Colorado plenty of rigidity is a custom SMP crossbrace that ties together the two halves of the front suspension.



**RIGHT:** Powering the Colorado is the unique inline five-cylinder, 3.5L engine that has benefited from a K&N air cleaner and a set of mufflers from Morse Muffler. An Optima battery provides plenty of start-up spark.



**LEFT:** SMP built this tire carrier/tailgate to hold the extra Method wheel, and along the front of the bed one can just see the upper shock towers for the King shocks.



**ABOVE:** Corbeau Baja XRS suspension seats provide the perfect combination of styling and substance for the occupants.



**ABOVE:** The rest of the interior is stock, but Cuba is seriously considering a full rollcage.



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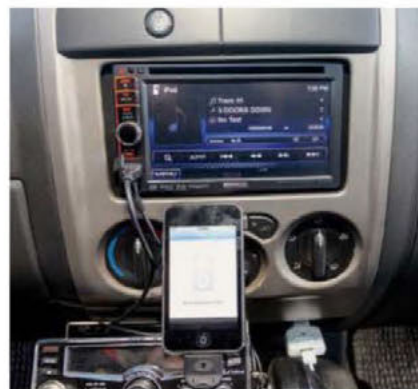
## A COLORADO PRERUNNER FOR THE WIDE OPEN SPACES

Muffler in Burbank, California, but we concur that a V-8 would be perfect to go along with all of the other mods that the Colorado now boasts. That'd give Cuba a chance to really put that suspension travel to the test!

After working at his construction gig all week, Cuba says that his Colorado is "Dirt Therapy" and that during four years of the creation of the truck he's had the opportunity to meet some pretty amazing upcoming talent such as Steven Parks of SMP. He says that the new generation of builders is just as pas-

sionate and crazy about dirt sports as he is, and that having his off-road vehicles (dirtbikes, 4x4s and prerunners) allows him to escape the asphalt roads and cut loose. That sounds about right to us.

Like we said, we didn't shoot his truck because Andrew Cuba is a subscriber; we shot it because he sent in a few pictures of it, and we liked what we saw. We're always on the lookout for great trucks or cars to feature, so if you have a nice, and we're talking really nice, street-licensed off-roading vehicle, let us know about it. **DS**



**ABOVE:** A nod to creature comforts is the addition of a Kenwood head unit that is connected to an Apple iPhone.



### SOURCES

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**SMP FABWORKS**  
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**ABOVE:** Sporting a Dirt Sports tattoo Andrew Cuba has the right truck, and it should go without saying, the right attitude.



**ABOVE:** From any angle, this Colorado shows that it's what a real prerunner should be.



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BY **banks**

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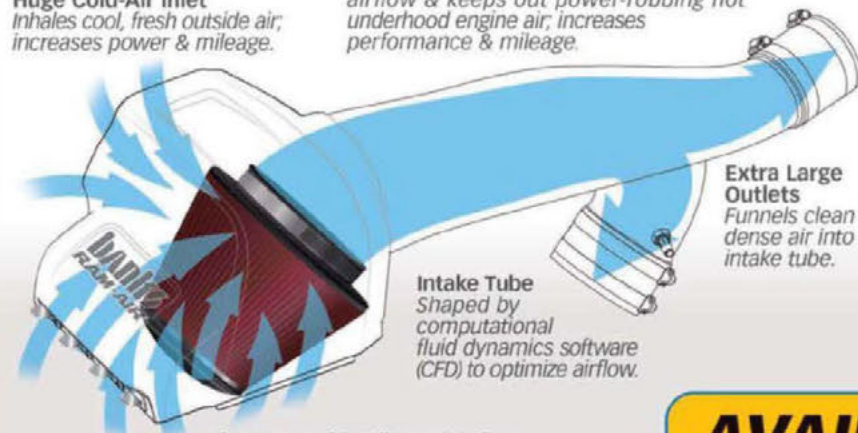


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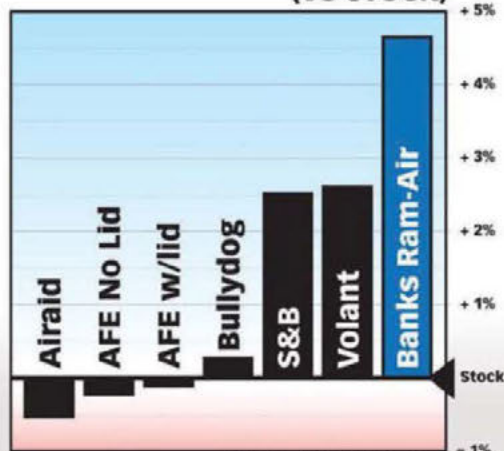
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# BIG AIR WITH NO BENDING

WORDS AND IMAGES // JERROD JONES

## AXLEHOUSING UPGRADE FOR DODGE RAMS

**D**odge Rams are great trucks, and the 2500 and 3500 models are available in front solid axle configurations. Better yet, they ride and handle nicely in the dirt when modified. They even come with an available Cummins diesel engine, giving them gobs of torque for lots of fun off-road play.

But while the front solid axles are strong enough to handle day-to-day street duties, the AAM axles aren't quite robust enough to handle vigorous (read: airborne) off-road adventures in the dirt—especially when outfitted with a heavy diesel engine.

So, without going completely custom to replace an axle that has ABS sensors and possibly factory lockers, your next best step (and much more economical one) is to reinforce what's already under your truck.

Carli Suspension, makers of premium Dodge suspension components, quickly learned that once they built kits that allowed Dodges to start moving faster off pavement, the front ends were bending at an alarming rate.

Enter the Carli fabricated axle truss kit. It gives the front ends of 2500 and 3500 4x4 Dodges a much better chance of surviving the rigors of extreme off-

road use under the heavy front end of a truck. It's not a "direct fit" item, meaning that you'll have to do some grinding and welding to make everything fit together, but that should be expected with any custom axle kit that requires some fabrication.

We went to Mercenary Offroad in Camarillo, California, to watch them weld a truss onto the front end of a '05 Ram 2500 with 41.5-inch Pit Bull tires. Extremely heavy tires combined with a Cummins diesel engine and rigorous off-road use left this axle aching for some bracing, which it got in the form of a Carli axle truss. **DS**



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### RIGHT:

The Carli Suspension axle truss showed up in a single box with gussets and tube saddles packed inside. It's a do-it-yourself weld-on truss, so expect to do a little finessing with a grinder and welder.

### BELOW:

Don't get confused by these plates tack welded onto the ends of the truss. They're for shipping purposes only—so the sharp ends of the truss don't cut through the box and fly out of the packaging. Knock these off with a grinder or hammer.



### LEFT:

The Carli fabricated axle truss is made out of 1/4-inch plate cold rolled steel and has crossbracing and reinforcement ribs that add to the strength of the truss. Tube saddles sit inside and perpendicular to the truss so the truss is welded to the tubes in more than one direction, further improving strength.



### LEFT:

While some guys do weld axle trusses on while the axle is still under the truck, Todd Farrand of Mercenary Offroad removed it and stripped the housing down. He also cleaned the metal of the housing well before starting.

Common beliefs state that you should weld the truss on, with weight on the axle, if it's perfectly straight and unhurt. But, if the axle is bent (upward, most likely from impact, leaving your tires angled in at the top), there is the potential to bend the tubes back down a bit by welding the axle unloaded, out of the truck. If everything goes as planned, the metal housing will pull toward the truss as it's welded, and you'll fix your caster issue.



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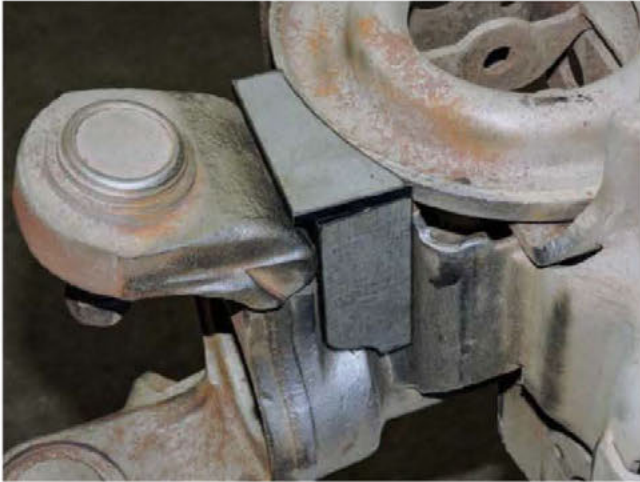
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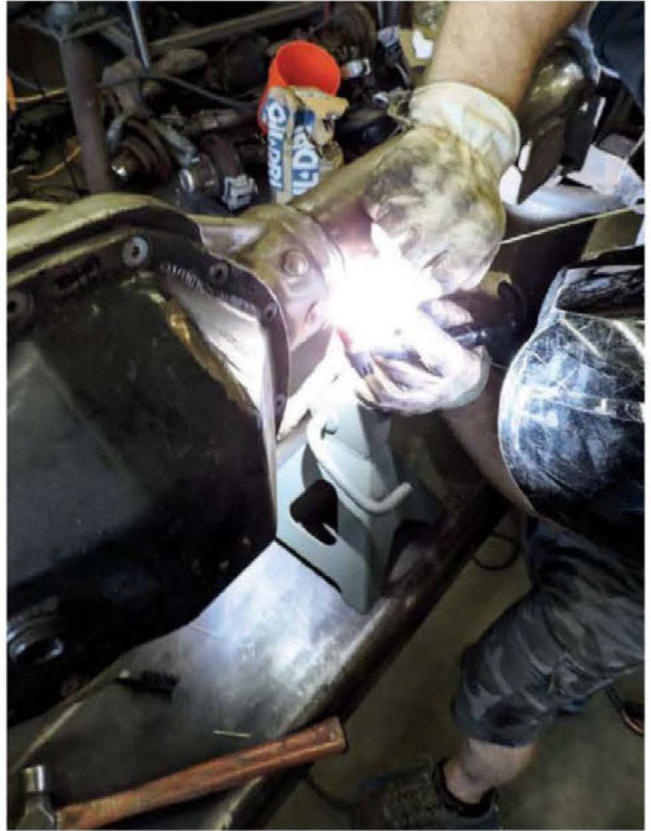
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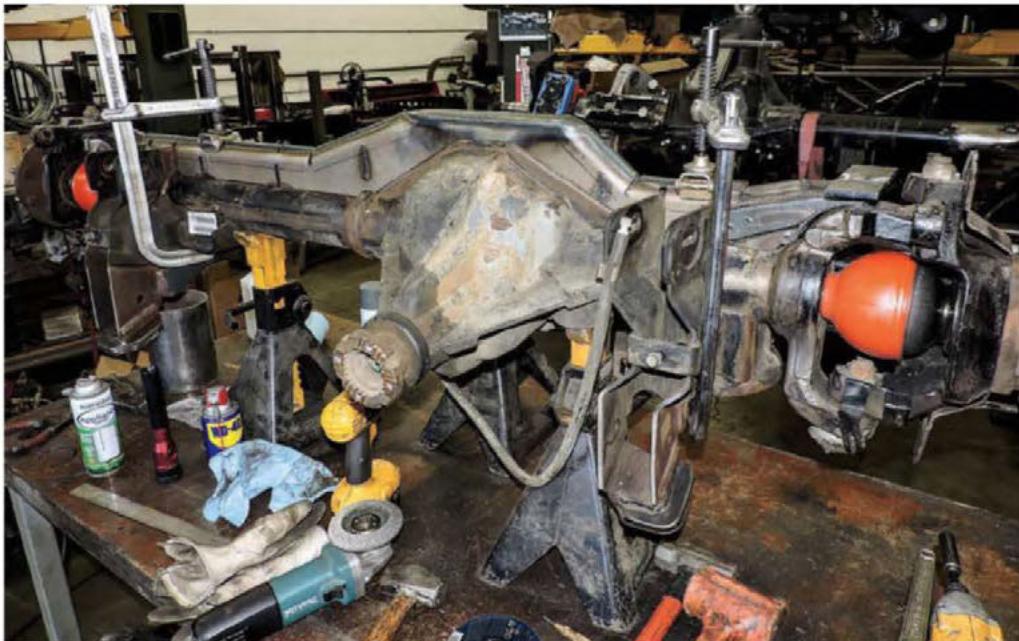
#### ABOVE AND RIGHT:

The Carli kit comes with gussets for the upper and lower parts of the inner Cs of the axlehousing. This is also another weak point for the Dodge AAM front axles. If the tubes don't bend (or stop bending), then the inner Cs will be the next to fatigue. Carli's kit makes sure to address both the front, back, top, and bottom of the inner Cs.



#### ABOVE:

Without starting a huge debate on how to weld to certain metals and what types of material to use, we'll tell you that Farrand used nickel rod to weld to the cast differential, after he heated it up, and then let it cool after each pass. He used stainless rod on the inner Cs, after also heating them up.



#### LEFT:

Since Mercenary Offroad pulled the axle out of the truck, it gave Farrand the ability to flip it over and make work on it much easier. No one likes to weld overhead and upside down.

As he welded the kit together, Farrand made sure to keep the truss squeezed as tightly as possible to the housing.





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**ABOVE:**

While Mercenary Offroad was successful getting their welds to stick and not crack, be aware that welding to the inner Cs and cast centersection can be tricky. Make sure to check for minute cracks that might appear along the welds as the metal cools. If you see cracks, grind out, figure out what was wrong, and start again. If you don't have practice welding to material like this, we suggest letting a more experienced welder help you out.

**BELOW:**

Ground clearance is diminished a bit with the Carli axle truss installed, but that's not an issue to the vast majority of Ram owners who will never use their trucks for extreme rockcrawling where the differentials could be hung up.

**SOURCES:****CARLI SUSPENSION**

714.532.2798

[www.carlisuspension.com](http://www.carlisuspension.com)**MERCENARY OFFROAD**

818.653.6637

[www.mercenaryoffroad.com](http://www.mercenaryoffroad.com)**RIGHT:**

You can see why a Carli fabricated axle truss was sorely needed on this Ram 2500. Even with the truss installed, the 9.25 AAM axle still looks a little puny in between the massive 41.5-inch tires.





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# OPERATION: DEEP POCKETS

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THE COMFORTS OF HOME

**WORDS** MATT EMERY // **IMAGES** BOYD JAYNES

**P**rerunning for a Baja race goes back to the very beginning. Every team that's serious about winning preruns the course. They know where every bump in the road is and plot every opportunity to make up ground on their competition

that the long course may provide.

How and what they prerun is almost as varied as the racers themselves. But like most things in life, it comes down to financial realities. Teams with less





of a budget may make the trip once, and do so in the same vehicle that they chase with (and probably drive to work in). The more well-off teams run multiple times and they do it in style, but the majority aren't really driving what they'll be competing in.

Then there's guys like Jim Smith. He not only wants to prerun, he wants to do it in something that closely resembles

what he may be in during a race. But he also wants to be comfortable. Like, air conditioning comfortable.

So Smith went to Dale Dondel of Racer Engineering and basically said, "Build me a Trophy Truck, but one that's street legal, runs on pump gas, can fit three and has the creature comforts of a brand-new truck." That's what he has with this Trophy Truck-based Raptor

prerunner. The chassis is a full-on Racer Engineering Trophy Truck chassis. Made from 2-inch, 1.20-od wall 4130 Chromalloy, and featuring RE's race-winning suspension, the truck has a 130-inch wheelbase, a track width of 92 inches and weighs in at nearly 7,000 pounds. This is a big, very capable truck.

The front suspension consists of Racer Engineering hardware that gives up a solid 24 inches of wheel travel. The upper and lower arm components are made from 4130 Chromalloy, features 1.5 NHBB uniballs, and are 100 percent TIG-welded. A set of King shocks, one 4.5 bypass backed up with a 3.0 coilover are found on each side (all four corners actually, but we'll get to that), and ensure that the wheel travel is precise and predictable.

A pair of huge, 60-inch trailing arms





enables the rear suspension to produce a whopping 32 inches of travel while giving the "Raptor" superior straight-line characteristics. Yes, King shocks play their role and do so with their usual stellar results. Another item that you'll find on each corner are the StopTech brakes. Utilizing six-piston calipers that put the squeeze on 14-inch rotors, the StopTech units are what Dondel runs on all of his Trophy Trucks, so stopping for those roadside tacos during a prerunning session is only a pedal stomp away.

Though the truck isn't very high off the ground (relatively speaking, of

course) the huge BFGoodrich Baja T/A KR tires (42x13.50 R20) dominate though, even they look proportionate thanks to the 20-inch Ultra Motorsports Xtreme 101 Forged Xtreme True Beadlock wheels. The wheels, which Ultra recommends to be for competition-use only, are not only tough, they look really good on the truck. Yes, we like our trucks to look good too.

We also like them to run well, and so does Smith. The engine powering the Raptor is actually a Chevy small-block that is really a Trophy Truck engine that has been de-tuned to run on 92-octane

pump gas. Built by Nogrady Racing Engines, it displaces 472ci that even "de-tuned" still produces 750-plus horsepower and over 700 lb-ft of torque. In addition to the huge amount of displacement, it has a lot of things going for it. One is the Life Racing fuel-injection system. Fully integrated into the vehicle's induction and electronics with a Danzio wiring system, the Life Racing system is augmented by the Racer Engineering Fabricated headers and exhaust system.

One thing about prerunning (real prerunning) is that the truck really needs to be reliable enough to get there and back.



**ABOVE:** Black on black with some black accents, this Raptor is menacing from any angle.



**ABOVE:** StopTech brakes with six-piston calipers and 14-inch rotors end the rear suspension that features 60-inch trailing arms, King shocks and a whopping 32 inches of wheel travel.

**RIGHT:** Even in its "de-tuned" state, the Nogrady Racing Trophy Truck engine displaces 472ci and produces 750-plus horsepower and over 700 lb-ft of torque, all while running on 92-octane pump gas.







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That's why a dual UMP Air Filter setup has been installed as well as a Meziere water pump, CBR radiators, and a Racer Engineered plumbing system using Brown and Miller components.

Putting the power to the Racer Engineering housing-based rearend is done through a Culhane Racing Turbo 400 transmission.

Yes, the body is a Ford product as various Raptor pieces are used. The body features a combination of powdercoating and paint. A Rigid Industries 40-inch bar has been placed behind the Raptor grille. Just below that grille is the RE-designed and built, skidplate-equipped push bar. With the blackout look of the body and

polished Xtreme wheels, this is one fine-looking truck.

*Fine* is also a word that works inside the Raptor, as Armando's Custom Upholstery in San Jacinto, California, who normally does high-end hot rods, added a layer of leather to the Ford's dash, headliner, and door panels. The dash has also been equipped with a Life Racing dash panel, a 10-inch Lowrance GPS system, the control panel for the PCI Race Radio's Pro Elite comm system and a master panel from Life Racing that handles all the switching for the entire truck. Well, not every switch, there is the control panel for the ProAir air-conditioning system and a Kenwood stereo system.

The JetTrim seats are black, of course, and there's three of them! MasterCraft harnesses keep all secured. The MOMO steering wheel is a one-person affair though and shifting is done with a Winters shifter.

If this truck seems over the top, it is. The Racer Engineering crew has over 5,000 hours in this build. Now, is this something that we'd take out and prerun in? OK, that's a dumb question! This is exactly what we'd be in (if we happened to be millionaires). Not many off-road trucks feature world-class technology with the creature comforts of a well-appointed supercar, but this Raptor has them all.



**ABOVE:** Leather trimmed and equipped with every trick, the dash is every enthusiast's dream.



**RIGHT:** The "competition only" 20-inch Ultra Motorsports Xtreme 101 Forged Xtreme True Beadlock wheels have been shod with equally comp only BFGoodrich Baja T/A KR tires.



**ABOVE:** Providing plenty of style and protection are three black JetTrim seats that have been equipped with the Ultra Xtreme logo, while the five-point MasterCraft harnesses provide safety during hard prerunning sessions.



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**RIGHT:**

Sporting enough electronics to make the Space Shuttle jealous, the sculpted dash features a 10-inch Lowrance GPS system, the control panel for the PCI Race Radio's Pro Elite comm system, a monitor and master panel from Life Racing, the control panel for the ProAir air-conditioning system, and a Kenwood stereo system.


**LEFT:**

The oil is cooled with a pair of Dailey heat exchangers.

**BELOW:**

This Raptor is a perfect example of what cutting-edge technology and deep pockets can achieve.





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## BUILDSHEET

### RAPTOR TROPHY TRUCK PRERUNNER

#### CHASSIS:

##### MANUFACTURER:

Racer Engineering Trophy Truck,  
4130 Chromalloy 2-Inch, 1.200D

##### WHEELBASE:

130 Inches

##### OVERALL LENGTH:

NA

##### OVERALL HEIGHT:

NA

##### TRACK WIDTH:

92 inches

##### WEIGHT:

7,000 Pounds

#### ENGINE/DRIVETRAIN:

##### MANUFACTURER:

GM

##### BUILDER:

Nogardy Racing Engines

##### DISPLACEMENT:

472ci

##### HORSEPOWER:

775

##### TORQUE:

Over 700

##### INDUCTION:

Life Racing Fuel Injection

##### AIR FILTER:

UMP

##### EXHAUST:

Fabricated Racer

##### COOLING:

Oil by Dailey CBR radiators

##### PLUMBING:

Racer Brown and Miller

##### WIRING:

Danzio

##### TRANSMISSION:

Culhane Racing Turbo 400

##### REAREND:

Racer Engineering Housing

#### SUSPENSION:

##### FRONT SUSPENSION:

Racer Engineering, 24 Inches of  
Wheel Travel

Trophy Truck 4130 Chromalloy  
100 Percent TIG-welded 1.5 NHBB  
Uniballs

##### REAR SUSPENSION:

Racer Engineering, 60-Inch Trailing  
Arms, 32 Inches of Travel

##### SHOCKS/FRONT:

King 4.5 Bypass, King 3.0 Coilover

##### SHOCKS/REAR:

King 4.5 Bypass, King 3.0 Coilover

#### BRAKES:

FRONT: StopTech 6-Piston Calipers  
With 14-Inch Rotors

REAR: StopTech 6-Piston Calipers  
With 14-Inch Rotors

#### WHEELS/TIRES:

##### WHEELS:

Ultra Motorsports Xtreme, 101  
Forged Xtreme True Beadlock

##### TIRES:

BFGoodrich Baja T/A KR, 42x13.50  
R20

#### EXTERIOR:

##### BODYWORK:

Raptor Cab,

##### PAINT/GRAPHICS:

Powdercoated Cab With  
Painted Straight Edge Paint and  
Powdercoating By B&B Riverside, CA

#### LIGHTING:

Rigid Industries 40-inch LED Lightbar

#### INTERIOR:

##### SEATS:

JetTrim

##### HARNESSES:

MasterCraft

##### STEERING WHEEL:

MOMO

##### DASH:

Black Leather

##### GAUGES:

Life Racing Dash

##### AIR CONDITIONING:

ProAir

##### SHIFTER:

Winters

##### GPS:

Lowrance, 10-Inch Screen

##### RADIO/INTERCOM:

PCI Race Radio With Bose Headsets

##### STEREO:

Kenwood

#### BELOW:

Made from 4130 Chromalloy, the front suspension is all Trophy Truck. It features King shocks and has 24 inches of travel.



#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- // [WWW.ULTRAWHEEL.COM](http://WWW.ULTRAWHEEL.COM)
- // [WWW.RACERENGINEERING.COM](http://WWW.RACERENGINEERING.COM)
- // [WWW.MASTERCRAFTSAFETY.COM](http://WWW.MASTERCRAFTSAFETY.COM)
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# STEERING SYSTEM UPGRADES

WORDS AND IMAGES // JAY KOPYCINSKI

**O**ff-road steering systems take a beating and it's one of those vehicle systems you don't want to fail. They endure increased load inputs from rough terrain and bigger tires, along with the simple hazards of running into obstacles or debris. Forward mounted steering rods are vulnerable to impact, so anything that can be done to relocate them higher buys one ground clearance and more margin against smashing a rod into a rock. Repeated exposure to dirt and water can accelerate wear in moving parts, so upgrades and protection here are beneficial.

A common step is to increase the diameter and/or wall thickness of exposed steering rods. In gen-

eral, thicker wall tubing increases dent resistance, while larger-diameter tubing increases rigidity and resistance to bending. Many times, an increase in diameter is constrained by physical limitations around the area where the steering rod moves, so the only way to increase bending resistance may be thicker wall tubing or stronger material grade.

A swap from using OEM-style tie-rod ends to heat-treated chromoly or stainless steel rod ends (sometimes call Heim joints) can mean running stronger end connections and make carrying spares easier if a common joint is used in multiple locations. Most automotive rod end sizes are specified by male-thread shank diameter and spherical ball bore diameter. Lubricating liners are commonly used on quality rod ends to prevent metal-to-metal galling between the spherical ball and the race in the rod end body. Where needed, use of misalignment spacers on each side of a rod end can increase its operating angle. 



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# KOPYCINSKI'S BRAIN

## RIGHT:

The most commonly used material for steering rods is heat-treated DOM steel tubing as shown here. It's often conveniently threaded directly for rod-end threads or weld-on threaded tubing adapters can sometimes be used to accept rod ends. An alternative is solid 7075-T6 aluminum rod. This specific grade of heat-treated aluminum has the ability to flex more than steel and can spring back straight with somewhat of a material memory. Additionally, a solid aluminum rod will typically be a bit lighter than the steel tube, depending on size and tube wall thickness.



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## ABOVE:

OEM steering on factory vehicles always uses tie-rod ends on the steering rods. Aftermarket or racing steering often use rod ends in place of tie-rod ends. Rod ends can be stronger and may provide greater operation angles. When shopping for rod ends, you usually get what you pay for, and the higher-priced ends are made from better materials that offer greater strength and higher-quality synthetic lubricating liners between the ball and rod end body. Increased operating life is another benefit of quality rod ends. They have a finite use life and should be replaced once they stretch or the balls become loose in the race. Note that rod ends may not be considered street legal in some States.



## BELOW:

Single shear mounting such as this tie-rod end and rod end (*top*) can be used, but when possible double shear mounting (*bottom*) is stronger and safer with all other factors being equal. The rod ends are also completely captive should a spherical ball come free from the rod end body. Sometimes it's simply not possible to fit double shear structures on the steering system. Note, the single shear rod end mount here has a large-diameter safety washer above the rod end. This also serves to keep the rod end body captive to the steering arm should it separate from the ball.



## RIGHT:

If you choose so, you can purchase individual supplies and build your own first aid kit from scratch to suit your specific needs. This allows you to become more familiar with the kit you carry and tailor its contents more toward the types of injury scenarios you are likely to encounter. Building your own kit also allows you to cater to any container restrictions you may have, whether it's a small dirt biking pouch or a very substantial first aid kit you carry on your 4WD or race vehicle.





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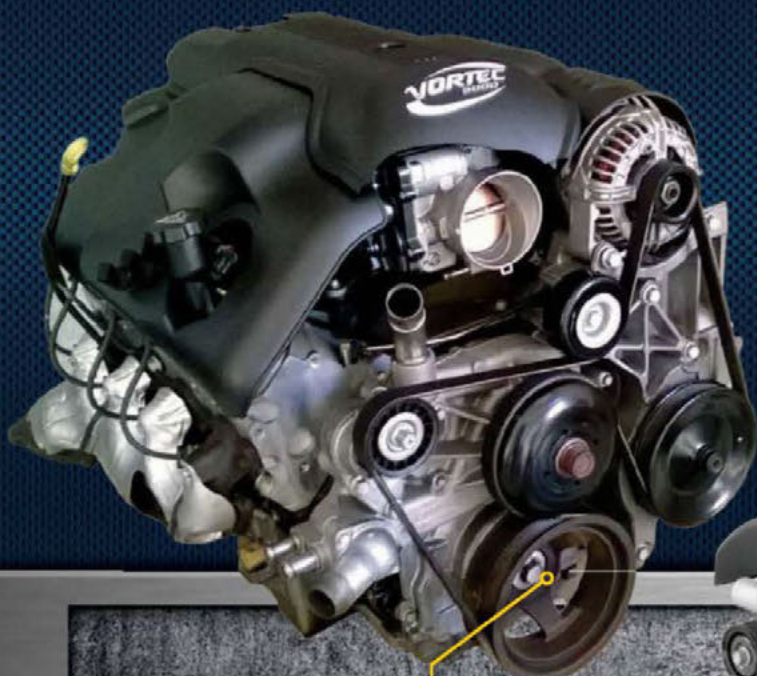


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## « RUGGED RADIOS

### RRP6100 RACE INTERCOM

Rugged Radios has released their new ready-to-race RRP6100 intercom. The intercom features the ability to turn side tones on and off with just a flip of a switch. This feature reduces background noise, allowing driver and codriver to clearly communicate. Additional features include driver isolate allowing the driver to focus solely on racing, leaving the radio communications to the codriver. Dual volume controls allow for independent adjustments.

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## MAGNAFLOW

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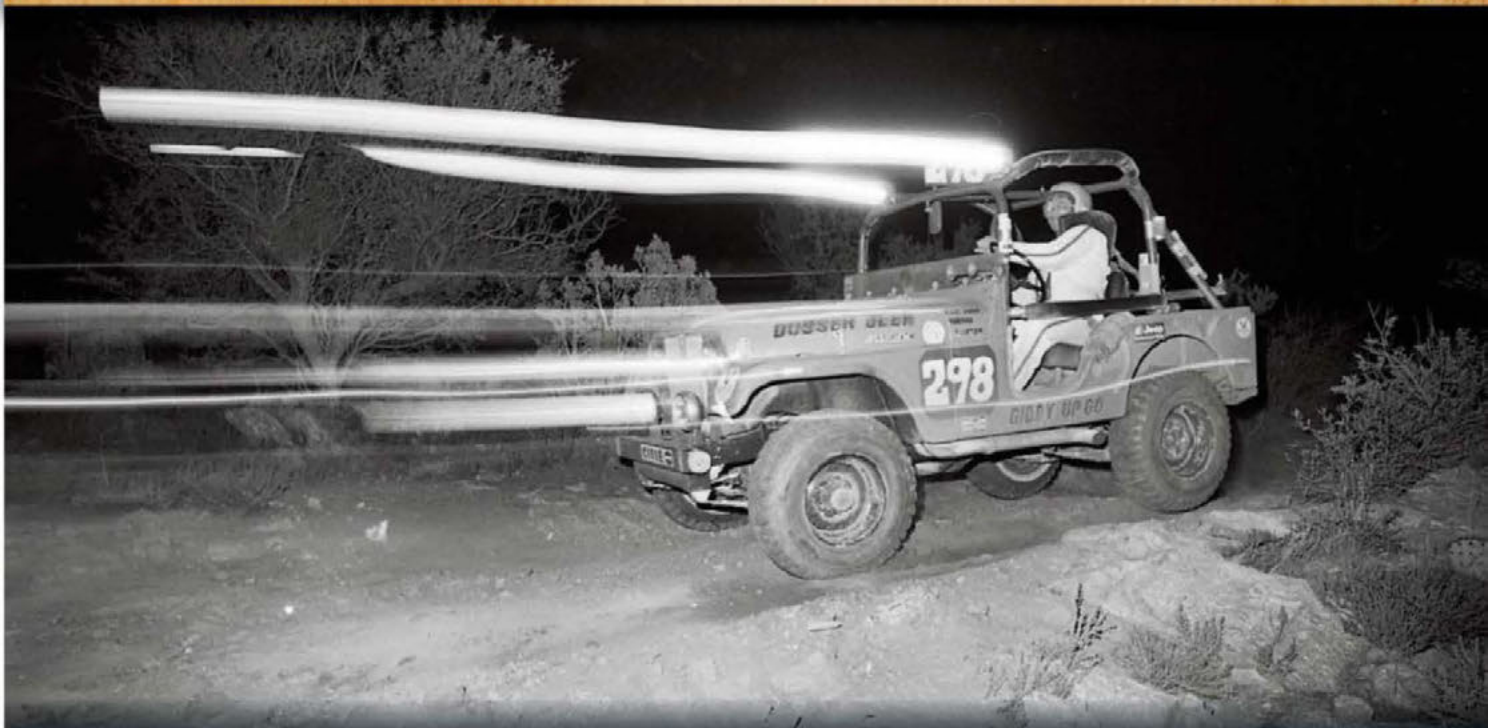


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As his lights penetrated the Baja wilderness, Dick Dahn was on his way to a Second Place in Class 3 at the 1974 Baja 500. This was one of many of Dick's accomplishments, which had an impact on the sport of off-road racing.

As another pioneer of the sport, Dick was already involved in building race-tracks for Mickey Thompson's start-up SCORE International at the old Riverside Raceway. He was, by trade, a heavy equipment operator, licensed to operate all kinds of rigs, from a backhoe to a bulldozer.

Even before he started racing, Dick and his friends and family would go out on weekends to the Salton Sea, Chocolate Mountains, Glamis, and Blythe in a front-engined buggy made out of an old car frame. In the '60s he started racing in the Santa Ana riverbed and at Anza Borrego in his Jeep.CJ., and then entered the NORRA and Score Baja 500s in the early '70s. He also volunteered his time at Orange County International Raceway as a flagman at the off-road races held there in the early '70s.

In '78, Jeep hosted a couple of celebrity races, and retained Dick's services as a codriving coach for singer Tanya Tucker and boxer Ken Norton at separate events. These events were terrific crowd pleasers held at the L.A. Coliseum and Riverside Raceway that year.

One of his biggest achievements was racing for Brian Chuchua in the 1979 London to Sydney Marathon Rally for the USA team in one of Brian's Jeeps. Chuchua was known at the time for entering international racing events for Jeep.

As a gun for hire, Dick built tracks all throughout Southern California and Nevada, from short-course tracks for Walt Lott, to Glen Helen, and worked the SCORE Riverside event for Mickey Thompson and Sal Fish. When Mickey Thompson decided to put on a closed-course series, he hired contractor Jim Kitchens and Dick to build the track. The first event was at Pomona Fairgrounds, and the series quickly expanded to the L.A. Coliseum, Anaheim Stadium, and Jack Murphy Stadium in San Diego. This series was the Off-Road Championship Gran Prix, and ran for about 16 years, and Dick was part of many of the tracks built.

The T&J Off Road Racing team (who still campaign a Jeepspeed in Best in the Desert) also availed themselves of Dick's talent. "He was a very good driver," said T&J's Tom Barnett. "To me, he was like a John Wayne figure, very strong, but stern, and soft on the inside."


Family friend Cheryl Gater spoke of her childhood, off-roading and the Dahn family. "I met Dick Dahn when I was

about 4 or 5 years old, as he worked with my father running heavy equipment in Santa Ana. Dick and my father were long-time buddies from teenhood. As a child, I called him "Dick Backhoe," since my father knew so many men named Dick ... to help me keep him sorted from the rest. He was always so fun! Dick was, to me as a small girl, the father who I so much wanted mine to be like! He was kind, willing to listen to me, and his daughter Cindy quickly became my partner in all sorts of crimes and plans. Dick was a good man with a big heart and great stories."

#### POSTSCRIPT:

Dick partnered up with Steve Patton in the 2000s to campaign a stock VW sedan in the MORE racing series. "He was great to have on the team", said Steve. "He showed me a lot about driving, which lines to take on a race course. He had tons of experience. And best of all, his family took me in as one of their own. He made friends wherever he went."

Dick left the confines of this earth and died in April of 2009.

Enough said. Vaya con Dios, Dick. 

*Vaya con Dios*  
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